

REMARKS

Applicants cancel claim 1. Claims 2-14 remain pending in the application.

Applicants amend claims 2, 4, 9, 11 and 13 for further clarification. No new matter has been added. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Headrick et al. (US Patent 5,724,358, Headrick hereinafter) in view of Tasaki et al. (US Patent 6,895,006, Tasaki hereinafter).

Claim 1 has been cancelled and claim 4 has been rewritten in independent form including the limitations of claim 1. Claim 4 recites "assigning output order identification information for designation of an output order of the packet, the output order of the packet indicating an input order of the packet among a plurality of input packets including both the unicast packet and the multicast packet and indicating whether the unicast packet arrives earlier than the multicast packet." The output order identification information is "a serial number indicating input orders of all packets input through all input ports, or a serial number indicating input orders of all packets output through each output port."

It is respectfully submitted that the asserted citations do not teach at least the aforementioned recitations of independent claim 4.

The Examiner conceded that Headrick fails to disclose

"assigning output order identification information for designation of an output order of the packet, the output order of the packet indicating an input order of the packet among a plurality of input packets including both the unicast packet and the multicast packet and indicating whether the unicast packet arrives earlier than the multicast packet...."

of claim 1 and the serial number features recited in claim 4, and relied upon Tasaki as a combining reference that allegedly discloses these features. Page 4, line 3 et seq. and page 7 of the Office Action.

Tasaki describes the following at column 2, lines 46-48.

12 is an index search section to get output port information corresponding to output index information included in the header field by referring to an output port conversion table 13.

Tasaki further describes the following at column 3, lines 4-9.

The header field 41 stores destination information such as VPI/VCI (virtual path identifier/virtual channel identifier) etc. that is converted into particular and simple form so that the internal cell is correctly subject to the switching inside the unit.

However, Tasaki fails to disclose “output order identification information for designation of an output order of the packet.” Instead, Tasaki merely describes output port information corresponding to output index information included in a header field, and the output index information is destination information, such as VPI/VCI. The destination information is not output order identification information.

Tasaki further describes the following at column 4, lines 5-11.

FIG. 5 shows an example of the content of the memory 13B in a case that there are 4095 ($\approx 2^{12} \cdot 1$) types of output index information and there are 16 output ports. According to need, the output index information can be expanded to 65535 ($\approx 2^{16} - 1$) types. The address range of 000H to 00FH is used for the unicast, and the address range of 010H to FFFH is used for the multicast.

However, Tasaki fails to disclose “the output order of the packet indicating an input order of the packet among a plurality of input packets including both the unicast packet and the multicast packet and indicating whether the unicast packet arrives earlier than the multicast packet.” Instead, Tasaki merely describes output index information as a memory address, and separate address ranges are respectively used for the unicast and the multicast.

Thus, the output index information of Tasaki does not indicate an input order of a packet among a plurality of input packets including both a unicast packet and a multicast packet.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 4 patentably distinguishes over Headrick in view of Tasaki.

Since independent claims 5, 9, 11, 13 and 14 recite features that correspond to those of claim 4 described above, claims 5, 9, 11, 13 and 14 patentably distinguish over Headrick in view of Tasaki for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claim 4.

Tasaki further fails to disclose “a serial number indicating input orders of all packets input through all input ports, or a serial number indicating input orders of all packets output through each output port.” Instead, Tasaki merely describes destination information such as VPI/VCI. Thus, Claim 4 further distinguishes over Headrick in view of Tasaki.

Since independent claims 9 and 13 recite features that correspond to those of claim 4, claims 9 and 13 distinguish over Headrick in view of Tasaki for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claim 4.

Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 4, claims 6-8 depend from claim 5, claim 10 depends from claim 9 and claim 12 depends from claim 11, respectively. Therefore, claims 2, 3, 6-8, 10 and 12 patentably distinguish over Headrick in view of Tasaki for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claims 4, 5, 9, and 11, from which they depend.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection is overcome.

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully

requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,

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